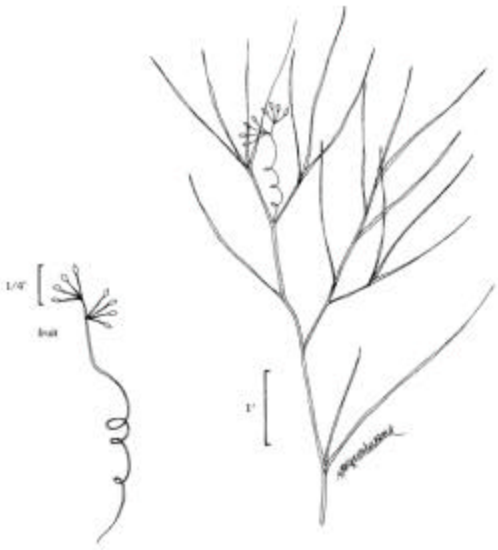
Wigeongrass (*Ruppia maritima*)

- "Wigeongrass like it's relative sago pondweed, rates as one of the most valuable species of submerged aquatics in the whole country" (Martin et al. 1951).

- "bays that have kept their wigeon-grass have kept their ducks; those in which the plant has been destroyed…have lost them" (McAtee 1915).

- Wigeongrass is especially valuable to waterfowl because it thrives in alkaline or saline environments that are unfavorable to most plants.

- Maintains optimum growth up to 22 ppt salinity (Kantrud 1991).



Wigeongrass. Source: Soil Conservation Service. Western Wetland Flora.

- Waterfowl consume all parts of the plant: drupelets, branches, leaves, and rootstalks.

- Wigeongrass is primarily a food of dabbling ducks and diving ducks. In South Carolina, wintering green-winged teals, northern pintails, and American wigeons intensively use communities where *Ruppia maritima* and *Eleocharis parvula* co-dominate (Kantrud 1991).

- In irrigation wastewater evaporation ponds in California, American wigeons and redheads eat and uproot wigeongrass vegetation in deeper openwater areas; northern pintails then feed mostly on drupelets from the plants that was ashore (Euliss 1989).

- Wigeongrass composed 10% to 25% of the diet of redheads, and scaup; 5% to 10% of the diet of pintails and ruddy ducks (*Oxyura jamaicensis*); and 2% to 5% of the diet of mallards, canvasback, and green-winged teal (Martin et al. 1951).

- Wigeongrass provides cover for many estuarine and marine invertebrates (Kantrud 1991).

- Invertebrates associated with wigeongrass-dominated communities in western Europe number up to 43,800 m^2 with biomasses of up to 22.9 g/m^2 ash-free dry weight (Verhoeven 1980).